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MANKIND

DRAMATIC POEM

BY

H. TINTROP

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MANKIND

Ha, mighty Lord ! Who am I ?
What plan hast Thou Supreme with me ?
What's the reason I am here
Among tigers and monkeys ?
And why am I created ?

Are the groans of this breast
Sounds of welcome to thine ears ?
Is my misery thy pleasure ?
Oh, why is it
That ever I was reared ?

Rise thou furious storm and rage ;
Mystic fire touches me.
Shall a worm,
Down-trodden in the dust,
Not even
Manifest his agony,
And seek a place of rest ?

That an innocent infant, being
Thief or fool,
Beast or angel might become ;
The enraged Supreme has thrown it
In scornful temper
Poor and naked on the barren earth
For some.

So it appears in unconsciousness
Among its equals,
Whimpering the first welcome
And weeping's fame,
The only sign of entering
Into life's doubtful game.

Ah ! thou creature
Full of faults,
Something between high and low,
Has been gifted meagerly
By the Creator's scornful will.
When He dispatched his messenger
To spend all earthly gifts,

Quickly down
The angel rushed on cherub wings,
And provided first
Some other things.

He gave marvelous strength to the lion,
And bushy mane;
Soft feathers to the birds
And swans;
Every tree a useful bark;
He clad the fish
In golden scales,
And covered the tortoise with a shield;
He gave also the moths
Their veils,

Having nothing left worthy to give
When to the Creator's very image
Proud he came
But a nameless painful feeling,
Which is called
Shame.

Without thinking,
Without sorrows,
Never knowing pain nor death,
Feeds on evening and on morning
Every dog
His bit of bread.
Only poor mankind—
Oh, how grand!
Suffers death
Without an end.

This poor being
Must always fear or know
The bitter time,
When silence calls and stops
The twinkling of the brow.

Only born, jumps so happy
Every lamb around its mother;
Only born finds alone every chick
Its bit of fodder.
Only now the human child—

This fork beast,
And perhaps
The Creator's
Most finished piece of work—
Cannot move one step ahead,
Nor talk ;
Must learn first how to eat
And how to walk.

To-day, through necessity
And imitation,
It has only learned to walk and speak ;
To-morrow it will measure stars,
And pull the moon from distant skies.
It dreams of everlasting charms,
It prays in hopes and sighs,
Studies on philosophy,
And oversteps the solid wall
Between time and eternity.

Science's heroes and bigot impostors
Lived savage-like—

Bloodthirsty and always in dispute—
And Old Age's prophecy
Did cry,
Rooster-like,
In the early morning sky.

Shall I live forever,
Or shall I die?
Has the spirit only for a time
Borrowed his body?

Or am I a spook,
To hide myself in myself,
Fall back to earthly dust,
To weigh no more than other likewise
Stony crust?

Count up the fruits of knowledge,
And our eyesight—
Oh! it is blind,
Not even fit to look behind.

Our lovely pleasures
Are only phases ;
Our fabulous wisdom
Is a wicked child ;
One distant world,
No one can tell,
Connected with an earthly grave—
Oh, horror ! stop—
There is—the open space.

On this side lingers an imposing monster,
Monopolizes revenue,
And holds a songster
By trickery and cunningly displayed arts ;
It claims a bridge of spider-web
Its own.

With threats of solemn prayers,
Sacred songs and catechisms,
This blue-blot is baptized everywhere
In the mystic name,
The God's religion.

It does tell you by loud-singing chorus
This sole and secret bridge
Is guaranteed for passage
To reach the other distant shores.

This is the artfully invented
Spiritual feast,
Whereby only mankind is deceived,
And not the beast.

These animals have as a rule
Their time in spring
To play the fool,
Where men through all their life
Must enjoy a foolish burden,
Which sounds like love or gayety,
Oftimes betrays the youth,
By dealing out sweet honey
Mixed with poison,
And decorates the life-long road
With flowers
Of a rarer sort
For all to make it short.

Has a man escaped
This constant murdering,
Counts eighty years of life his own,
Leaves enchantments all alone,
To sign the bill of life, ,
Counts the gains to store away,
We say.

For happy hours,
Some unknown day ?
Then you will see that all he wins
Is hardly worth
A row of pins.
One-eighth part
The childhood took
Of his life's running term ;
Another eighth passed away
By old age's dizziness,
Without feeling or enjoying,
Without love and without kisses.
Tired of life,
He greets Death

As a heartily welcome friend.
One-half his life sleep stole away,
And in the rest
Pain and sickness held their sway.

Was the morning of thy life
Too wet from flowing tears ?
Was the noon too hot for thee ?
Oh ! the evening, gray old man,
Brought instead of pleasing comfort
Sorrows—
And annoying sneers.

Has so the farce play
Reached its end at last ?
Go around
From house to house ;
If only one is satisfied
With his unchangeable lot,
New hopes, new wishes, new pain
Every coming day,

One last wish,
A silent grave,
Is his heart's content
And save.

When neglected and unknown,
Not a friend will lend his hand ;
When only tears give charity
To wet his daily bread,
Lightning flashes
Illume his gloomy day ;
To him harsh voices cry :
" Leave this world,
And get yourself away—
Away ! "

Look yonder there !
Spy and hear
How they are talking
Of their companion's better work.
They criticise and measure all he does

Till they have found a wicked spot
On a really noble deed.
Ah! then they smile and shake their heads,
And chatter happy irony;
Call him crank, fanatic or infidel.
Instead of praising this worthy work
They shameless talk about its faults
And scatter it in all directions,
Like a merciless sea-storm does
The defenseless flying gulls.
Creatures only vile and wicked
Are their passions' willing slaves,
Without number, without name;
Jealousy, avarice and trickery,
The vengeance—poison sore—
Never leaves the poor insane.

Claws and teeth are beastly weapons;
For men are
Looks, words, poison
Saws and daggers
Made to strike.

When the woeful sights
Of poor creatures' huts
Drive my blood to stir and twist ;
When the youth is made a slave
To enrich a miser beast ;

When I part with my small offering
To save the needy
From distress ;
When I would like to sacrifice
One-half I do possess,

God, thou knowest
My earnest feeling ;
My thoughts appeal to Thee ;
But eyes of marble gaze on me
And believe it not—
Call it Arrogance,
Fool's play and romance.

When the creeping misery
Undermines the faithful worker's home,
Under Pluto's blood-red flag so bold,
A murderous villain
Gathers heaps of clinging gold ;
When honor and pure womanhood
Gets exchanged for silver trash ;
When high birth and shining metal
Do protect a crime brutal, rash ;
When a judge gets freely served
With wine and sumptuous meal
To interchange his goddess' hardest steel
In tallow or in wax,
To represent
When necessary hangman's ax ;
When Justice fair and strong
Gets traded out for
Harlot's pleasure song,
Oh! just try to doubt
Such fair exchange ;
Go mad on this, though true and natural.

Then, laughing, they will you and others tell,
Is this world an ideal ?

Rush onward, life,
Away from earthly skeletons
Into eternal mystic choir.
It fast consumes me,
This suffocating fire.

Condemned is the world
From king to ass ;
Condemned is all the human race.
To-day will kill you he
Who smiled only yesterday to thee.
Good brother dear,
Canst thou lie and steal,
And betray thy friendly host,
Thou are'st here a welcome guest.
Deceive, swear false, and flatter ;
Put oil on fires instead of water ;
Plunge daggers into the backbone of mankind ;

Have open ears for vile and slanderous talk ;
Incite brother against his brother
Till they have slain each other.
Canst thou do this ?
Then the world is thine.

Sing and pray from heaven,
The radiance of divine holiness
Around thy worthy face.

No doubt
Thou must win the game,
Because thou holdest four aces.
The happy one is always he
Who wins the races.

Oh! who can give back to me
The very day of first existence,
When I was nothing to this globe,
And served to please
Another scope ?

When I traveled to and fro,
On the storm, the water or the dew ;
When wonderful planets passed by
In endless variation—
In grand transplendent sights—
No tongue can justify their rights.

When in the ice-sea I was frozen,
From year to year growing anew,
Witnessed miraculous scenes,
This home for me was chosen,
Always busy, never resting,
And in innocence enjoying,
I was for curiosity
In the light with sunbeams playing,
Quick absorbed with other vaporous nations,
Slowly dragged away
To wonderous revolutions.

Fire, lightning crashes and thundering
Was heard.
This was the serious moment ;
I fell,
Inclosed in a water-drop,
Down to the earth.
There, in a humble plant,
I mostly was impressed,
Stored away among the greening grass,
Without pleasures,
Without distress.
Myself not knowing,
Every morn and noon
Woke up from sleep
By the warming, loving sun.
Then to the hills in youthful spring
I lent my flowry dress,
Till a chewing beast, bird or bee,
Came at last to swallow me.
This way I made, as feeding mush,
My home in milk and blood.

The human life began there and then,
Which threw me this time,
In a love-lust fever,
On this earth in shape of man.

To find perchance
Companions here
Who will make me master of society
Or slave,
Or cast me down
As prisoner in dungeon cell,
Make so this earthly paradise to me
A heaven, a workshop
Or a burning hell ;
To follow up the smooth or rocky road
To valleys, meadows, flats or hills,
And before I die must meet all earthly good and sins
In pay with fearful dreams, pains and ills.

So I must, for a handful of pleasures
Found in brief,
Willingly suffer. One-half this world
Full of misery and grief,
Was it worth miraculous work
To reach far down eternity
And build me up,
A living, whirling top,
When hidden mystery held me up,
To produce a wandering miracle
Of mankind's real variety ?

O Hero ! Thou Supreme !
I now commence to understand thy game ;
But soon my time is winding up,
When Thou dost free me
From the earthly dreaming thoughts and fame
And lettest me drop
Down to happy moments of my back existence,
Where I shall serve to Thee,
Thou nameless spirit, myself unknown,

Where from time to time
I represent a different zone.
Now the clock strikes twelve ;
Time comes to an end.
Divine Supreme, this Thou alone
Dost grant.

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